

# Academic Report Writing, Outlines

## Selecting Key Words

What is the definition of a keyword?

- a word or concept of great significance (Google, n.d.)
- an idea and/or topic that defines what your content is about (Moz, 2017)

Important ideas are written using an outline to help organize main and supporting ideas. Below is an example of an outline used for a DaimlerChrysler advert:

- › Advert for Daimler Chrysler
  - introduction
  - ⊕ factual description
    - ⊕ visual info
      - setting
      - same color → unity
      - # different sizes → diversity
      - fast trucking # slow speed
      - personification of the cars
    - ⊕ sound
      - music
      - choirs ↗
  - ⊕ symbols
    - ⊕ setting
      - Salt Lake → speed (subliminal)
      - racing → competition
      - whiteness + mountains + sky – human presence → purity
    - ⊕ fusion
      - infinite sign
      - dawn = birth of new era
      - choirs = cars singing in harmony
    - ⊕ a successful merger
      - darkness → dawn
      - from thunder to harmony
      - battle turns into ballet
      - low music → glorious
  - ⊕ personal judgment
    - target: shareholders > potential customers
    - positive or negative

Look at the outline; notice that full sentences are never used. Note other important features:

1. *only keywords*
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_



Mercedes-Benz



Choosing the right key words for an outline means finding the words that contain the most meaning. Often they answer who/what/where/when. For example

In Abu Dhabi, the 2015 sales of the Mercedes C Class model shot up 189 per cent.

2015 AD: Merc. C class ^^ 189%

**Now read the following sentences and choose the key words:**

From 1878, German entrepreneur Carl Benz worked intensively <sup>1</sup> on a gas-driven two-stroke engine to realize his vision of a 'vehicle without horses'.

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After long and laborious attempts, he got the engine running for the first time on New Year's Eve in 1879.

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Germany's first two automotive companies entered a partnership agreement in 1926, and Daimler-Benz was born.

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Daimler-Benz named their joint automobile project the Mercedes-Benz, which gained a reputation for being a technologically advanced luxury vehicle.

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Today, the Daimler Group is a globally leading vehicle manufacturer that offers an unequalled range of first-class automobiles, trucks, vans and buses.

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<sup>1</sup> Often texts use difficult adjectives and adverbs for extra description. These are usually not used as key words.